

The *WEAVERS* of *London* do humbly offer to the serious Consideration of both Houses of Parliament ;

That this Kingdom of England will sustain great Evils and Damage by enjoining the Wear of Woollen Manufactures and Leather, both by Men, Women, and Children, by a Law ; and so consequently restraining the Wear of Silks and Hair Stuffs manufactured in England ; And that great benefit may ensue to the English Nation, by prohibiting the Use and Wear of Silks and Stuffs Foreign manufactur'd, appears by these following Particulars, viz.

THE *Restraint* of wearing Silks, and Stuffs made of *Mohair Yarn* manufactured in *England*, will necessarily impoverish and depopulate the Nation, there being no Trades in *England* that imploy so many People as those relating to the Manufacturing of Silk and Hair ; for upon the most modest computation they are judged to be above Three hundred thousand Souls *Weavers, Throwsters, Windsters, Dyers*, and other Dependents thereupon, that do subsist thereby, and that have no other way of Livelyhood ; and a great part of these have served seven years Apprentiship to their several Trades, according to the Laws of this Nation, (which makes their Trades a Freehold and Inheritance) and have Families depend upon them. Now if by *Law* there should be any *Restraint* of wearing *English made Silks and Hair Stuffs* for any part of the Year, they would be deprived of their said Freehold and Inheritance, and must of necessity not only be impoverished, but want bread in one year, nay the greatest part of them in one Months time, they having nothing but from hand to mouth, and what they get by their daily Labour to supply their daily Wants ; and consequently the greatest part of them must be necessitated in a short time either to take rude and desperate courses, or transport themselves into Foreign Parts to get their Bread ; there being no other Employment (either Handicraft or others) that can receive one fourth part of so great a Number, considering that the *Old and Young* are hereby employed, and cannot otherwise, but be chargable to the places of their Abode.

If it be objected, that this *Restraint* is intended but for five Months in the Year, and therefore cannot have such dismal Effects as are before mentioned : For Answer it is said, That these five Months *Restraint* of wearing them will take off the Employment of the Manufacturers thereof eight Months in the Year, and in little time amount to little less than a total Prohibition of them ; for that the persons that wear *English made Silks and Hair Stuffs* are generally of the best Quality, and all of them either Leaders or Followers of the newest Modes and Fashions, and therefore it cannot be supposed that they will buy Silk Garments to lay by them all the Winter to wear in Spring, for that then newer Modes and Fashions will come in, and there cannot be allowed less (one with another) than three or four Months for them to wear out a Silk Garment : So that take the five Months in the Year wherein they are not to be worn at all, and the three or four Months before, which must be allowed for the wearing of those they have already bought, there will not remain above three or four Months at most for the Manufacturers to sell their Silks and Stuffs ; which amounts to little less than a total Prohibition, for this reason, for that the Merchants either cannot, or at least will not, give credit to the *Weaver or Throwster* the Year round ; and if they should, yet is there not one *Weaver or Throwster* in a thousand, that is able to supply their *Workmen and Windsters* with Money so long time, without Returns of Money for their Commodities, So that it is manifest notwithstanding this Objection, the forementioned mischiefs of Poverty and Depopulation must ensue upon it.

And if it be objected, That it is not intended to restrain the wear of Stuffs made of *Mohair Yarn*, commonly called *Chamlets*, or other Stuffs, whereof the Woof or Warp shall be of *Mohair Yarn* ; This must be acknowledged to be so, but withall, these *Chamlets* and Stuffs are limited to be used for Cloaks and Coats for Men only, which do not work up the fourth Part of the *Mohair Yarns* imported, nor do they imploy one sixth Part of the Hands that *Mohair Yarns* would imploy ; for it is to be noted, that the several Commodities hereafter named, viz.

<i>Barratines</i>	<i>Crispiana's</i>	<i>Calamantoes</i>	<i>Farrendines</i>
<i>Prunella's</i>	<i>Tamaleta's</i>	<i>Mohairs</i>	<i>Morella's</i>

and divers other Stuffs are made up of three Parts of *Mohair Yarn*, and but one Part of Silk ; and these are chiefly for the use of Women and Children in the Winter season, who are not allowed to wear the same.

That as this will impoverish the Manufacturers of *Silk and Hair Stuffs*, so it will also diminish the consumption of *Wooll*, and impoverish the Manufacturers thereof, and consequently cause yet a greater Depopulation of the Nation.

Because the greatest part of our Cloths and Stuffs made here of *English Wooll* are transported beyond the Seas, and chiefly to *Turky*; in exchange whereof the Merchants bring *raw Silks and Mohair Tarn*, which sets so many thousand people to work again; and if the Consumption of *Silk and Hair* be abated in *England*, as it must needs be by the *Restraint* of the Wear thereof, the Exportation of Cloth must needs abate proportionably thereunto, for that there is little other Commodities proper for *England* to be had there in exchange for our Cloths; so that whereas the *Turky Company* in particular have of late exported twenty five or thirty thousand Cloths in a Year, they may be reduced to ten or twelve thousand, and by degrees to little or nothing; and consequently there will be eighteen or twenty thousand Cloths lie on the Clothiers hands in one Year more than they can vend; and that there will be such an Abatement in the Exportation of *English Cloths*, if *English made Silks and Hair Stuffs* be not allowed to be worn five Moneths in the Year, will appear not onely from the former Argument, that there are little other Commodities to exchange in *Turky* for them but *Silk and Hair*; but also because the Winter Season, wherein these *Silks and Stuffs* are prohibited to be worn, is the chief time for the Consumption of *Silk and Hair Stuffs*, for that the richest *Silks and Stuffs* are worn in that season, and is the principal time for the Consumption of them. And if this be true, (as most certain it is) that this will cause so great an Abatement in the Exportation of our Cloths made of *English Wooll*, what miserable Poverty and Desolation will it bring upon the Manufacturers of the Staple Commodity of this Nation, and in little time force them also to transport themselves to Foreign Parts, to the great Depopulation, Dishonour, and Danger of the Nation; for hereby there will not be People sufficient to eat up the Corn, nor strength to defend the Nation.

If it be objected, That the enjoying the wearing of Woollen Manufacture five Months in the Year, will answer the Consumption of Wooll that is abated in the Exportations: It is answered, That it had need exceed it three times over; for that the making 60000 Cloths in a Year more than now is, will not set so many people at work, as the other will throw out of work; and if it could be supposed that there would be vent for so many more, it is presumed there would not be found Wooll enough to make them, it being now somewhat a scarce Commodity, and raised in price a third part to what it was some years past. So that indeed at this time there is no just cause to complain of the want of Consumption of Wooll, it being a good scarce and ready money Commodity; but that the *Restraint of Silk and Hair Stuffs*, and the enjoying the Wear of Woollen, will neither increase the Consumption of it to such a degree, nor yet answerable to the Abatement of the Exportation of it by 15 or 20000 Clothes *per annum*, is proved thus; because the Nobility, Gentry, and better sort of Tradesmen, will not wear our coarse Cloths made of *English Wooll* onely, but fine *Dutch Cloth*, and Cloth made of *Spanish Wooll*, which in some of the finest Cloths have not above five or six pounds of *English Wooll* in a whole Cloth, as the Makers of fine Cloths will acknowledge; so that little *English Wooll* will be consumed by them that use to wear Silks and Stuffs, and on the other hand the poor Manufacturers both of *Woollen, Silk, and Hair*, they generally wear our coarse Cloths and Stuffs made all of *English Wooll*, and these being either impoverished hereby that they cannot cloath themselves but with Rags, or be forc'd beyond the Seas, must necessarily cause a far less Consumption of our *English Wooll*. For it cannot be supposed that the expence of *English Wooll* in fine Cloths, can answer to the loss of that expence which is now worn by these poor Creatures. So that indeed the expence of *English Wooll* will by this means be abated in *England* not onely so much, but much more than what the Abatements of the Exportations of our Woollen Manufactures amount unto, by means of such a *Restraint* of the one, and enjoying the other.

That by *Restraint* of the Wear of any part of *Silk*, the Consumption of *Wooll* must needs be lessen'd, for that the several Stuffs hereafter mentioned, *viz.*

<i>Bombazines</i>	<i>Virgins Beauty</i>	<i>Worsted Barratines</i>
<i>Anthorines</i>	<i>Drafts of all sorts</i>	<i>Glassamines</i>
<i>Silk Sayes</i>	<i>Druggets of all sorts</i>	<i>Katherina's</i>
<i>Crape</i>	<i>Silk Calamantoes</i>	<i>Tameenes</i>
<i>Silk Masquerades</i>	<i>Silk Gloriosa's of all sorts</i>	<i>Estameenes</i>
<i>Strip Cheney's</i>	<i>Silk Shades</i>	<i>Effegenes</i>

and all or most of *Norwich Stuffs*; with great numbers of other Stuffs, too many to be here inserted, having but one part of *Silk* in them, and nine parts of *Worsted*, which is our *English Sheeps Wooll*, which through the Ingenuity of the *Weavers* and others concern'd therein, are made very acceptable for the use and wearing of divers persons in the Winter Season; yet because of that little part of *Silk* in them, cannot then be worn in Apparel, to the lessening

the Consumption of Wooll, and to the taking away the chief part of the Trade and Employment of many thousand persons.

This *Injunction* of the one, and *Restraint* of the other, will much depress the Protestant, and advance the Papal Interest, not only in *England*, but throughout *Europe*; and were it not but that by the unanimous Votes of this present *Protestant Parliament*, wherein (to the chearing of *English Hearts*) they have manifested so much zeal for the *Protestant Interest*, and the Rights and Privileges of *Englishmen*, it would cause great suspicion of ill designs; for there is nothing more conducing to the destruction of the *Protestant Religion*, and the advancement of *Popery*, than the disuniting of the Hearts and Affections of the *English people*, who are generally *Protestants*, and the best sort of *Protestants*. And this the *Jesuits* have not been wanting by all means to effect, and there is nothing more proper thereunto, than to bring off the Affections of the People from the Love of *Parliaments* by any means whatsoever, which they know are the greatest Anticipation and Obstruction of their damnable designs; but through the mercy of God they have in a great measure been hitherto prevented, and it's hoped yet will, by a timely prospect of those things that may cause it. And though it cannot be thought, that any true *Englishman* would knowingly countenance, but detest such designs; yet it is feared if such an Act should pass, it would not only alienate the Affections of many thousand *Protestants*, by exposing them to Want and Penury, and to beg their Bread, and seek it in other Countries; but also would make this great and populous Nation, (which at present under God is the Fortres of the *Protestant Religion*) indefensible against the Papal designs, by scattering up and down in other parts of the World, those that are ready at all times, and best adapted to defend it, and put them upon a temptation by their necessities and dwelling amongst them to turn *Papists*. And this also in a short time will carry away the Trade of the Nation (which is now increasing and flourishing) to other parts of the World that are generally our Enemies; to the utter ruine of the whole Nation, both in Trade and Navigation, and the sacred Religion thereof. And of what evil consequence this will be to the Nobility and Gentry, by bringing down the price of their Lands, may easily be conceived by an ordinary Capacity.

Again, If this *Injunction* of the one, and *Restraint* of the other, do pass into a Law, it will not only destroy the most chief and principal Manufacture of the Nation, whereby so many Thousand Native *Protestants* get their livelihood and subsistence, but (which is considerable) it may truly be called the *Protestant Trade*, for it sets to work and employs most of the Strangers and Foreign *Protestants* that fly from the tyrannical Persecutions of the *Papist* other Countries, and They must be forced also to return again; for it is judged that Parts of ten of the *Protestant* Strangers that comes over into *England*, are employ Trade of *Silk* and *Hair*, to their great comfort both of Soul and Body: And the *London* do freely receive them, and that in so great numbers, that a very great *Silk* and *Hair-weaving* Trade is managed by them and their Dependants. And *Silk* and *Hair* Trade encouraged, as it's hoped it will by this *Parliament*, there might receive 100000 more into the Trade, so beneficial is it to *England*, and so considerable to the strength of the *Protestant Interest*.

But now if it shall please the *Parliament* instead of *restraining* the wear of our own Manufactures, to *prohibit* the wearing of *Silks* and *Stuffs* Manufactured in Foreign Parts, this would certainly enrich and people the Nation, and cause a greater Consumption of Wool, as also advance and strengthen the Interest of the *Protestant Religion*.

It will enrich and people the Nation, for that a great deal of the Money that is sent out of the Nation to purchase the *Silks* and *Stuffs* Foreign Manufactured, will be kept among us; as also all that Money that is paid to Workmen abroad for the Manufacturing of these *Silks* and *Stuffs*, will be earned by the Natives and Strangers in *England*, and so make way for the Employment of many Thousands more than is in the Nation.

It will also increase the Consumption of *English* Wool abundantly, for that there being more expence of *Silk*, because of the Manufacturing of those *Silks* here that use to come from other Parts, there will be also far greater quantities of Cloths made of *English* Wool exported in exchange for *Silk*; and besides the expence of *English* Wool will not only be increased by the exportation of more Cloths, but a great deal more than is will be worn in *England*, and the Plantations belonging thereunto, by this means; for that Foreign *Silks* that come ready wrought from other Parts, especially from *Holland*, *France*, and *East-India*, with their painted Calicoes, are generally slight and very cheap, and set up the meaner sort of People (as Maid-Servants, and others) in the garbs of Gentry, which otherwise would wear the decent, useful, and profitable wear of Cloth, Kerfies, and other *Stuffs* made of Wool, as they would also do in the Plantations, for that our *English* *Silks* being generally rich and well made *Silks*, they cannot so well go to the price of them, and that this prohibition of Foreign-wrought *Silks* will certainly promote the Consumption of Wool, is manifest by Experience; for since the late good Act was made for the prohibiting of *French Silks*, (which

(which it's hoped this *Parliament* will renew) there has been greater quantities of raw Silks imported, as also greater quantities of Woollen Cloths exported, than was in former years; besides, greater numbers of People employed, both Native and Foreign *Protestants*, to the great benefit of the Nation; which expence of *English* Wool has been chiefly occasioned from this cause, that more Silks has been made here in that time than before; which is an undeniable Argument to prove, that the more Silks are worn in *England* if Manufactured here, the greater is the Consumption of *English* Wool, for such person as wears a Silk Garment, doth certainly expend more *English* Wool (that being the return of Woollen Cloth) than twenty Gentlemen that wears Cloth made of *Spanish* Wool, and fine *Dutch* Cloths: And in all probability, if Silks Manufactured here were encouraged, and Silks Foreign made prohibited to be worn, it would reduce and bring back the whole Trade of the Woollen Manufacture into *England* in a little time, by preventing the exportation of Wool, for if Wool yeild as good or better price here than it doth in other Parts, as it will do if there be more occasion for it, it will not be transported as now it is to *France* and *Holland*, by which means they gain a considerable share of our Woollen Trade, to their great benefit both at home and abroad, and to our great loss and detriment.

This must needs corroborate and strengthen the Interest of the *Protestant Religion*, for that this Nation being the chief of all the *Protestant* Countries, the Riches and Populousness of it must needs strengthen it, as well as the Unity of them one unto the other, and this will certainly cause the Nation to flourish both in Riches and People, and through the Mercy and Blessing of God, make us yet more formidable and strong against our implacable Enemies, by enabling of us not only to defend our selves against them, but to root *Poperie* out of this Nation, and the rest of His Majesties Dominions.

For these Reasons, and many others that may be given, it is humbly prayed, That the Parliament would be pleased to lay aside that Bill which would restrain the wearing of Silks, and Stuffs Manufactured in England, which are so beneficial, and instead thereof, order a Bill to be brought in for the prohibiting the importation and wearing of Silks and Stuffs Manufactured in Foreign Parts, which are so plainly detrimental to the Interest of England: And the English Artists shall continue to pray, That as this Parliament have begun, so God would honour them so far, as to finish the deliverance of this Nation from Popery, and Slavery the effect of it.

FINIS.

Weavers of LONDON.

*An ANSWER to the most Material Objections against
the Bill for Restraining the East-India Wrought Silks, &c.
Humbly offered to the Consideration of the Lords.*

1699

Obj. **T**HAT Trade is in its Nature free, finds its own Channel, and best directs its own Course.

Ans. All trading Nations have, and do at this Day put a restraint upon Trade according as their Circumstances require: The French have many Years since, by extraordinary Impositions, prohibited all our Woollen Manufactures, and by that means have set them up in their own Country, to their great Advantage. The Dutch, who are little more than Carriers of Goods from one Country to another, yet do often prohibit, and for Instance, have by great Impositions prohibited our Dyed Woollen Manufactures, by which means they have gained that profitable Employment. The Venetians have prohibited our Cloth: The Sweeds and Danes the like. The French have by severe Edicts prohibited all Indian Silks, Bengalls, and Painted Calicoes; and a Multitude of Instances might be given of this Nature. Our own Statute-Books are full of them; the Act of Navigation, and the Act for Preventing the Exportation of Wooll have been, and are of infinite Benefit to this Kingdom.

Obj. That the East-India Trade is greatly beneficial to England.

Ans. If what the Writers for the East-India Company have asserted be true, That Three Parts of Four of the whole imported have been again exported to Foreign Parts, or if what the late Author of the Essay on the East-India Trade asserts be true, That one half has been exported and has brought in 600000*l.* more than the prime Cost in India, then this Trade, in that Respect, may well be accounted a profitable Trade to this Nation: But this, though often asserted, has not been made appear in such manner as a Business of so great a concern to the East-India Company ought, or might have been; and we have great Reason to believe that no such Quantities are, or ever were exported; But supposing that great Quantities were exported, this Bill does not extend to hinder that Trade.

Obj. That it must be granted that the East-India-Trade in General is prejudicial to Europe, and if all by common Consent would agree to deal no more with them, it would save the Expence of a great Treasure; but since that cannot be done, it would be Egregious Folly in us to quit it.

Ans. The Reason why the East-India Trade is prejudicial, is, because we draw from thence nothing of solid use, Materials to support Luxury, Perishable Commodities, and send thither Gold and Silver, which is there buried and never returns, and the Burden of this bears hard only on the Countries which consume them, as the Author of the Essay has very well observed, and from thence inferr'd, That the French did wisely to prohibit. Now if this be true, as undoubtedly it is, there cannot be greater or more cogent Arguments for the passing this Bill, which is not to destroy the whole Trade, but only part of that which their own Advocate acknowledge is very hard upon us, who are the Consumers.

Obj. The Bill now proposed will be absolutely destructive to the East-India Trade, and should we quit the Hold we have in India, the Dutch will undoubtedly ingross the whole, which will be of dangerous Consequence.

Ans. That what by this Bill is to be restrained cannot be computed to above one half of the home Consumption, and the whole is accounted, by the Author of the Essay, but one half of the Trade; so that at most it will be lessen'd but one Fourth Part, which by the Addition that may be made by bringing home Raw-Silks, Cotton Yarn, &c. may in a great measure be made good; And why Three Parts and more should not be carry'd on without the remainder, is very hard for us to imagine. The French have prohibited all Wrought Silks, Bengalls and Printed Calicoes; and yet they carry on their East-India Trade: and in case the East-India Company, either through Poverty or any other Reasons, should not be able or willing to carry it on, there are Merchants enough in England to take it up: But if we cannot trade there without the Consent of the Dutch, who are now very powerful and can bring together 40 strong Frigats (as the Author of the Essay tells us) which is much more than we are able or can pretend to do, they may as easily beat us out of the whole as of what will be still left. Therefore the best way as we humbly conceive to secure us from those Fears, is, to keep our Treasure to imploy our own people, and increase our strength at home.

Obj. The Company send great quantities of our Manufactures, and have in return Wrought Silks.

Ans. The Company are obliged to send 100000*l.* worth of our Manufactures, but have not done it; for by Accounts taken out of the Custom-house Books, there cannot be found 100000*l.* worth in Two years last past, and not 20000*l.* worth last year, and how much of this has been really Exported and sent to India we know not, but have great reason to believe that great Quantities were either not shipped off, or not sent thither, but to Spain or other Parts where they take in Bullion; for this is most certain that the Indians wear none, or so little of our Manufactures as is not worth mentioning: 'Tis true that since the Company have been obliged they have sent some Cloth, which they have sold in the Gulph of Persia, and brought in returns Raw Silk, which have been wrought up by the